



GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

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Holding on while letting go



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

From childhood through middle age, tenacity was one of my greatest strengths. Now that I'm settling into maturity, letting go with equanimity has been my challenge and quest in both my personal life and with Groundcover News.

Groundcover has now been publishing for six years. That marks a good time for a change in leadership. We welcome Greg Hoffman as the new President of the Groundcover News Board of Directors and later this month someone else will take over the management of daily operations. I will continue to volunteer, write and oversee the production side

GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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for the time being, with our editors doing the lion's share of the work.

The strength and diversity of the Groundcover organization and the positive impact we have on people's lives is a source of great satisfaction. But what makes me smile is my recollections of the people I've gotten to know through the years as a result of my affiliation with Groundcover News. One of my goals for this year is to capture as many of them as possible in cameo photographs.

For the past few years my father has been talking about selling his condo and moving into a senior community, so every time I visit we try to empty out more stuff. It is always easy to discard other people's belongings to which you have no attachment. It is infinitely harder to let go of things that have meaning to you.

An avid photographer, my father filled an album with photos from every trip my parents took. And valuing photos, he saved the family photo albums he inherited from his parents. Every album

Orlando: an essay on threats and firearms

by David KE Dodge
Groundcover Contributor

The looming threats to our cherished heritage of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness reside not so much in the form of government attacks against the masses – best answerable by the people with firearms – but in the form of biased policies, best answerable by unarmed mass activism.

However, the larger menace to our heritage is the threat of institutional erosion or subversion of rights, and departure from orderly self-government. Such decay of rights and due procedure is better prevented than responded to after the fact. It is best avoided by the prudent choice of wise elected officials, and best responded to by nonviolent activism by the masses.

The martial threat to our heritage in current times comes not so much from government as from private or independent actors with firearms, either isolated or in collusion. Therefore, in the here and now, "the security of a free state" necessitates that the people have no right to keep and bear arms except as participants in a militia, well regulated, by the public. Still, I have no objection to people holding firearms as a matter of thoughtfully considered government allowance of some weapons to some people.

we discard represents another piece of history gone forever. Some hold our memories of people and activities we loved.

I flinched watching my father excise pieces of his past, consigning to the incinerator *Hiking Trails of Harrison County* with the words, "I can't hike anymore" and his notebooks of Italian saying, "I can't travel to Italy again." And yet, when he looks at the pictures from his trips, I can see him transported, living parts of them once again.

My husband and I are also downsizing, so every item I take from my father equals an item of ours we too will have to relinquish. I am notorious for keeping things. I'm finally able to trash without wincing the pottery pieces our children painted at birthday parties – but not the cards they made or their favorite toys and books.

What I saved used to be based on the likelihood that I'd repurpose them or pass them on. Now I find that I cling to them to revive my memories. The nuances in each of the thousands of pic-

tures we have of my mother bring her back in a slightly different way, evoking memories of other times she looked just that way or wore that exact expression.

Photos of my grandparents seen through my eyes are less evocative and those of my great-grandparents are interesting but completely lacking that reminiscent quality. It saddens me that the many pictures of my mother will be only two-dimensional representations once those of us who knew her intimately are gone, too.

But since that's how life is, I'll go through the old family albums and pull out a few pictures of ancestors that identify them and the period in which they lived and let the others go. And I think I'll hold on to the thousands of pictures of my mother and my kids at various ages, and the art projects and mementos that remind me of past adventures. And I'll create a new Groundcover album.

If space is tight, I'll reduce the furniture and gadgets – except, of course, the book shelves.

myself showing violent inclinations.

The United States has a long history of regulating firearm sales and possession, all without falling into totalitarianism, and without being overrun by bad men with guns, or guns being solely owned by outlaws. In fact, failure to effectively regulate firearms as a matter of broad national policy feeds the violence by bad men with guns in demoralized regions of the nation.

I suppose that, within those regions, there are good men with guns to counter the bad. The only problem is that nobody knows who's who. The chance is 50-50 that the good end up dying at the hands of the bad. And sometimes, the bad kill the bad, and the good kill the good. It's just a crap-shoot. And a policy of widespread gun holding and carrying just ushers us into becoming a nation of armed camps – every town and city neighborhood a mini-Afghanistan.

The chant, "*The best defense against a bad person with a gun is a good person with a gun*," is received with approbation by the American public only at peril of having to relearn the lessons of the Wild West. The best defense against a bad person with a gun is taking away his or her gun, or keeping him or her without a gun to begin with.

The chant, "*If guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns*," presumes that law enforcement is impotent in enforcing public policy. There is no reason to believe that law enforcement in the United States is impotent, and there was evidence in Britain that criminals tended to obey the gun control laws, as long as the Bobbies were not armed.

To the chant, "*God made all men; Colonel Colt made all men equal*," I respond, "God made all men; Colonel Colt made all men fearful." And that is what our society has become.

All of the above is not a siren call for removing all firearms from the possession of every United States citizen. Common sense is needed; I myself have owned a gun, and would still have one, had I not voluntarily sold it when I noticed

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Use your words



by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell
Groundcover Contributor

Later this month, my younger daughter Molly will prepare her classroom for her eighth year as a Chicago public school teacher. One of her common teaching mantras sounds like something out of Robert Fulghum's popular 1980s book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. For five years teaching pre-school and now first grade, she says over and over again each day: "Use your words!"

We wake up many mornings here and now wishing that so many people or groups, ourselves included, could learn to use our words – words that are less hateful and less hurtful, more hopeful and more honest, truly constructive and compassionate. In a world of dangerous rhetoric, weapons and distancing from one another, words that matter for our common safety and wellbeing are walked over and left behind.

For her part, Molly spent part of this summer in an intensive Spanish language program in Costa Rica, to deepen her already-decent Spanish for her ongoing communication with the Spanish-speaking parents of many of her students. Using our words frequently requires that we learn something new or expand what we already know.

In the realm of Groundcover News, vendors on street corners, writers on the page, various people who midwife each issue to publication, and purchasers of the paper across Washtenaw County are willing to expose ourselves to one another as we tackle together critical issues of right now. Using our words means we work hard, we come back repeatedly and we resource ourselves for the long haul while we commit to changes that we know are necessary. We don't always agree. We have been known to find one another difficult. But we keep returning, using our words.

In the county where I now live in northern Illinois, there is a town called Shabbona. It is named after a 19th-century chief of the Potawatomi people. Three women, from Shabbona, Wendy, Linda, and Vicki, biked 3,500 miles across the country from Astoria,

Oregon to Washington, D.C. over the past few months. They made the trip to raise money for the Shabbona Pathway, a 3.1-mile multiuse community trail that will connect the town of Shabbona, local schools, a forest preserve and several parks to more than 30 miles of trails within Shabbona Lake State Park.

Their long trip wasn't always easy and often meant they depended on the kindness of strangers, some of whom put them up in their homes. With cell phones, the internet, a blogging site, and face-to-face conversations, they used their words for 3,500 miles not only to tell the story of the trail but also to relate stories of people they met, people they relied on, people who protected their vulnerability and invited them beyond learned wariness of strangers. Using their words moved them across the miles and into an openness to receive what others offered them.

I bought a new tee shirt from Syracuse Cultural Workers after the shootings at the Pulse nightclub on June 12. It used to be that, when I purchased a tee shirt that promoted a cause or stated my opinion, I chose an extra-large size that I could comfortably sleep in. Years ago a friend of mine pointed out that if I only wore my words in the dark of night, they would never seed meaningful conversations with others. Since that comment, I buy tee shirts in the medium size that I customarily wear.

My new tee shirt bears a quote from the Dallas Holocaust Museum: "Stop Hatred, Ignorance, Bullying, Genocide, Indifference, Prejudice, Intolerance, Apathy Now." No matter where I am when I have it on, someone asks me about it, expresses appreciation, wants to know where I got it, and exchanges more than a simple greeting with me. The tee shirt is a vehicle to unleash my words at a moment's notice.

There are varied opportunities for us to use our words to tackle threatening topics, to share, to put ourselves out there, creating an alternative to high-stakes conflict, for the sake of community and connection. Those words are our hope. They make us vulnerable, confront strangeness, push us to stretch, challenge the boundaries of our trust, and require us to be present and attentive. Using our words is a promise toward a future with one another in a widening circle.

The struggle inside

by Keagan Irrer
Groundcover Contributor

The struggle is human

The struggle is real

Everyone got their troubles

Everyone got their deal

I've had a strange life

Lotta stories to tell

Got mixed up in some shit

Got sent through hell

Scars on my body

Cop gun in my face

Tough to tell people

Who ain't been in that place

The guilt of my struggle

Is sometimes hard to relate

Get told just snap out of it

Like that'll set me straight

Why do you feel bad?

Your life is fine

There's people worse off

You don't get to whine

They say it's all in your head

Like that make it less real

But inside your head

Is everything that you feel

Inside your head

Is everything that you know

It's your whole damn world

But it mostly don't show

People pass on the street

Think they know from a glance

Everything about you

From your shirt shoes and pants

But everyone got struggles

Everyone got pain

And if life taught me anything

It's that mine weren't in vain

You can use your pain

It's tough, I know

It's a feeling you run from

Wherever it show

But you can't run forever

Someday you gotta deal

And when that day comes

That's when shit gets real

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Community Mental Health: doing more with less

by Rania Hanan

Groundcover Social Work Intern

According to 2013's Health Improvement Plan for Washtenaw County, the overall state of mental health for Washtenaw County residents may be on the decline. Unfortunately, the mental health services budget has been moving in the same direction.

Washtenaw County's community mental health funding has decreased by \$14.3 million over the past five years, with the largest cuts seen in the last fiscal year. An additional \$225 million in cuts to the state community mental health budget were contemplated by the Michigan Legislature for fiscal year 2017.

This is troubling, as the Health Improvement Plan shows that 16 percent of adults in Washtenaw County have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder and 22 percent with depression.

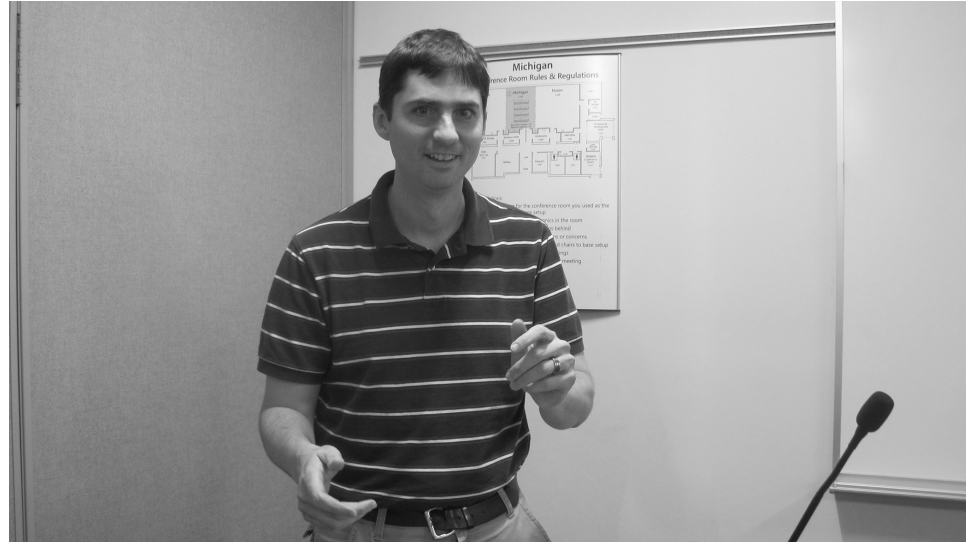
The importance of Washtenaw County's Community Mental Health (CMH) program cannot be overstated. It provides screening, diagnosis and treatment for mental illnesses and developmental disabilities.

The starting point for services at CMH is calling **Access, 734-544-3050**, which operates 24 hours per day all year long. In 2015 alone, the Access department, which includes a triage team, a crisis and assessment team and crisis residential services, received almost 56,000 calls and completed 1,400 assessments.

Annually in Washtenaw County, 800 families with children with mental health diagnoses or developmental disabilities receive social and emotional support through Youth and Family Services. Developmentally Disabled Adult Services is an individual, strength-based service that fosters community inclusion and meaningful activities; it currently serves 930 adults.

At one of the CMH town halls, Vohnnda, the mother of a teen receiving services, said, "It takes a village; I didn't know CMH was going to be my village."

CMH mental health has numerous programs for adults. The **Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness** (PATH, previously known as PORT) engages homeless adults with a possible mental illness who are not receiving case management services and helps them transition to the mainstream services they need. **OBRA** (the Federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987) assists aging and



At a Community Mental Health town hall meeting, Brother Mert shared about his experiences working with CMH clients as a peer support specialist.

medically fragile individuals to maintain their highest degree of functioning in the community in the least restrictive environment. They also provide consultation and screening to those seeking admission into nursing facilities, and continuing support services, when needed, to those admitted. **Community Living Supports** and **Respite** foster continuing independence and allow family caregivers time away from dependents who would otherwise have to live in a nursing facility.

Supported Employment services assist those with disabilities to get and retain paid employment in the community. **Jail Services** works in partnership with the courts, police and clinicians to provide appropriate placements and treatment for inmates.

Integrated Health provides limited mental health services such as short-term therapy as part of primary health care at Packard Health (the only clinic it is still able to service due to funding cuts). **Health and Wellness** offers many services including pain and disease management, nutrition services, walking groups, and social support to clients with co-morbid health conditions. **Nursing Services** provides medication coordination among doctors as well as education for patients and training for caregivers.

Youth and Family Services address needs for therapy, psychiatric services, wraparound services for children in institutional settings, Applied Behavioral Analysis for children on the autism spectrum, parenting and social support groups for children, preventive services for high-risk children, and case management.

Statewide, community mental health general funds were cut in large part due to the implementation of the Healthy Michigan Plan, which is the new Med-

icaid expansion plan. The State Legislature thought that the expansion plan would be able to cover the general fund cuts, but that hasn't been the case.

More people enrolled in the Medicaid expansion plan than anticipated, resulting in less money the State could allocate per patient. This reduced the flexibility in general fund distribution for non-Medicaid recipients. As a result, services that were provided with general fund money were left underfunded. In addition, mismanagement of funds within the now-defunct Washtenaw County Health Organization – an agency formed in 2000 that administrated and distributed Medicaid funds coming from the federal government through the state – led to a budget deficit of nearly \$4 million. Ultimately, what all of this means is that both clients and providers in the county are suffering. As of November 2015, 230 of 3,700 patients lost services.

Mark Creekmore, board president of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Washtenaw, likened what's happening now to the restructuring that took place during deinstitutionalization in the 70s. "These changes are enormous in scope. It's very possible that the systems could be much, much better as a result but that doesn't help the people who are in the system now, who need the care now," he said.

John Stacy, who supervises outpatient case management teams for CMH in Ann Arbor, commented, "In terms of the budget impact on us – which is directly related to the fact that our general fund has been reduced – there are new pressures staff-wise, client-wise and, mutually, operation-wise. In terms of clients and consumers, the significant reduction of the general fund has resulted in folks who are open to care with us and are without

Medicaid or HMP; when we provide services to them we are either not being reimbursed fully or not at all. And that obviously creates pressure in an environment where there are fewer dollars.

"There's more to do with less people; we're low on case managers, therapists, doctors – we're low on everybody in terms of the ratio of client-to-provider services. So we're trying to balance all that," said Stacy.

Other organizations that have been adversely affected include Fresh Start Clubhouse, the Corner Health Clinic, Hope Clinic, and Avalon Housing.

"The CMH budget cuts negatively affect both our clients and Avalon's support services. They've closed more than 200 cases, leaving some of our most ill and vulnerable community members without support. And we've received drastic cuts in our services funding – about 50 percent – so we are facing a very tight budget in the year ahead," said the executive director of Avalon Housing, Carole McCabe.

"Which is really unfortunate timing, since all across the country people are looking at behavioral health funding (like the Medicaid funds through CMH) as the best way to increase supports for this population. And Avalon is in the process of expanding services to both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Public Housing residents, as well as those scattered throughout the county with private landlords," McCabe continued.

Emily*, an on-again, off-again Groundcover vendor, has been with CMH long enough to observe before and after the changes. Like many others, she can get frustrated with the system but is still grateful to be a part of it, especially because of the positive experiences she's had in the past.

Over the years, Emily's caseworker has done things like giving her rides to her appointments and visiting her at home (when she had stable housing). Since the cuts, she's found it difficult to get hold of her caseworker or doctor and struggles to get basic services like a medication review. Still, she's the type of person that *will* be seen. "You have to advocate for yourself," Emily commented. "I don't give up. I call them and bug them." Not everyone has the capacity to do that for themselves, though.

Brother Mert is a certified peer support specialist on the CMH Health & Wellness Team. While he is incredibly

*Emily is a pseudonym.

see CMH, page 10

Homelessness and poverty in the Black Lives Matter movement

by Elizabeth “Lit” Kurtz
Groundcover Vendor # 159

The Black Lives Matter movement was ignited again when two African American males lost their lives last month at the hands of police. The footage was chilling to watch and for me as a black woman, reintroduced old fears. “Black Lives Matter” was the cry heard across the land and Ann Arbor was not an exception. With flashing lights, officers whizzed behind and in front of the marchers to ensure calm.

As is so often the case in these countless stories across the media, the major characters were two men, living on the fringes, homeless, and each in his own way, struggling to survive. This is the truth that is so often lost in stories. The homeless crisis is often embedded in a larger narrative, and all-too-often gets overlooked in events like this.

From childhood to his death, Alton Sterling stumbled into society’s pitfalls. After his mother died, Alton Sterling knew only an aunt, who served as his parent. At age 20, convicted of sexual misconduct with his then 14-year-old girlfriend, whom he also impregnated, he was like many other men of similar convictions, basically living in exile. No job opportunities, severe housing limitation; he used the resources available to him and sold CDs while he worked as a cook. He was living at a pay-by-the-night shelter at the time of his death.

Homelessness is no stranger to the



The social problems that need to be addressed by Black Lives Matter run deeper than just police shootings.

black community, but while proponents of the Black Lives Matter movement become enraged when a life is lost by a police shooting, that outrage sheds little light on many of the harsh realities that permeate the victims’ daily existence.

Black lives matter on so many levels. Not just when we are gunned down, but when standing on the street corner with virtually no hope of returning to a normal existence. Black lives matter when a six-year-old homeless child misses out on learning because she often can’t keep up with the rigors of a regular education while her family transitions through housing – let alone get the enrichment so vitally needed to make a child competitive with more financially

stable peers.

Undoubtedly, black lives matter. Not just when there is a shooting by an unjust police officer, but in the seemingly invisible crisis of homelessness that impacts so many lives.

Yet the word “homelessness” in itself has become a word that even the staunchest supporters of other movements tend to minimize and often shun when confronted with it. Even the most compassionate individuals often become reserved, even reticent at the mention of homelessness, seeming to accept that it is just a normal state of affairs. This is not to say that these supporters are disingenuous, but it does suggest they are taking an easy way out.

It was another homeless man who asked Alton Sterling for money while he was selling his CDs. Fearful of being robbed, as another CD seller had been, Alton Sterling had just begun carrying a weapon. He showed it to the man who insisted on asking him for money. And so the call to 911 was placed.

In an instant, Sterling’s life went from holding together his barely-stable life selling CDs to being surrounded by police whose judgement was biased. It came down to two men, misunderstood by the larger community and certainly by officers lacking in community engagement experience making life-and-death decisions based on preconceived notions.

The officers didn’t know that he was a well-known salesman in the area – that he and the store owner shared a business relationship and that this was a part of the livelihood that helped him care for his children. They didn’t know that those who bought CDs from him also enjoyed hearing his knowledge of the various genres of music that he sold. Even though he was a regular in

their precinct, they didn’t even know his name.

Had the responding officers known their community, they would know that he was amongst those who had rehabilitated their lives inside an unforgiving system. They would be aware that he was a likeable person who cared about nothing more than providing for his family. Had they known that he had survived against countless odds, perhaps their response to the call may have been different.

But his victimization happened long before that day. Even before this incident, most of his life seemed doomed by a system that no longer follows the principle of freedom from restrictions after paying one’s debt to society – a system that is hasty to accuse individuals of color of wrongdoing based on perceptions and stereotypes, which also lead to higher incarceration rates. Doomed because sexual offense incarcerations and subsequent restrictions often far outweigh the crime. Doomed because, as the ongoing series by Groundcover publisher Susan Beckett submits, he was guilty of being poor, and – it bears repeating – homeless.

And so while peaceful demonstration is needed, it must be in tandem with concrete action. It certainly requires that we engage with those who are facing housing and food insecurity. It takes the kind of action that ensures that all children have access to quality education, to be able to end all of our crises, whether or not they are part of a movement. It means that we not ignore the extreme importance of our officers and members of the street community coming together to offer solutions for each other’s survival.

Perhaps the best tribute to Alton Sterling was his son’s passionate plea for peace. He expressed the sentiment that highlights the values which contribute to a more stable society by saying of the resulting police slayings in Dallas, “The police in Dallas, Texas... they didn’t deserve that because, nobody knew if they had kids to go home to. Those kids need their parents.” Through his pain, he followed up with a request for peace, not violence.

So Cameron Sterling, the oldest surviving son of Alton, has a head start on knowing life’s trials. With insight beyond his years he has experienced life with a homeless father who was further victimized by police violence, all while trying to build a better life for him and his young siblings. If he can ask for peace, the very least we can do is heed his cry, and passionately work in our communities to that end.



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The Greek financial crisis – up close and personal at the INSP conference

by Keagan Irrer

The 2016 International Network of Street Papers (INSP) conference may have been the primary reason to go to Greece, but it wasn't the only reason I was looking forward to going. I, like so many in the United States, have watched the Greek economic crisis from afar, hearing the grotesque numbers – 25.6 percent unemployment and debt at nearly 200 percent of GDP, per *The New York Times* – but I wanted to know what the Greek people thought, and I wanted to observe for myself what those numbers looked like on the ground. Fortunately, the conference presented me with several opportunities to do so.

Merely wandering the narrow stone streets of Athens was enough to tell me that it was a nation in crisis. Five-star hotels and elaborate mansions stood tall in many parts of the city, but they were surrounded by shambling ruins. It wasn't just particular neighborhoods or sections that were abandoned; it was distributed all over the city – the crisis here had clearly hit the wealthy as well, for many of the ruins had once clearly been fabulous dwellings.

Several of them had graffiti on them; the city was riddled with it. Much of it, however, was political – graffiti that seemed to be a popular means of expression. As much of it was in Roman characters rather than Greek, I wondered if they wanted to make sure Athens' many tourists could understand them – if it was their way of reaching out to the world. Much of it was centered on the economic crisis; some of it was directed against Germany, the



Graffiti-filled walls in Athens reflect residents' angst over the continuing Greek financial crisis.

rest of Europe, or the rest of the world. There was anger, frustration – “Panama Papers sold here tax-free,” “Capital control, clean your money here” with a picture of a washing machine. The Greek people clearly felt they'd gotten a raw deal from the global political and financial elites.

However, the Greek people themselves seemed to be business-as-usual most of the time. Small shops and vendors perforated the city, hawking their wares, and restaurant owners would come out into the street and ask you to dine at their establishment. They clearly did not lack for hard workers, but for the most part the core of the economy seemed to be small, family-style businesses. When I noted this, I couldn't help but wonder: if the Greeks themselves do not have enough money, and their economy is not set up to draw money from abroad, save through tourism, then how would they be able to recover?

Fortunately, the INSP conference afforded me an excellent opportunity to explore the subject from a different angle. The keynote speaker of the first day was former Greek finance minister Yannis Varoufakis, who had been charged with handling Greek finances post-crisis.

There were a multitude of problems he identified, first and foremost being the EU. He claimed that it, and the Euro as a currency, were effectively set up to fail – that dramatic change for both was needed, but none seemed to be forthcoming. Europe's attitude toward Greece would only worsen the crisis. Their prescription for the crisis was mass privatization, and the sale of bad home loans to funds – funds that would foreclose on the families and leave them in the street. Land is so heavily taxed in Greece that nobody would purchase the newly-freed real estate, and much of it would simply lie unused. Homelessness,

Mr. Varoufakis said, would skyrocket with such a solution.

During his own tenure, he said that tackling tax evasion had been a tremendous priority for his office. It was a huge problem not only in Greece but in the EU, as well; the only surprise of the Panama Papers for him was that people were still surprised by it. However, his efforts to hunt down Greek tax cheats were heavily resisted and eventually entirely halted by the European troika – a combination of the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission, and the European Central Bank that was overseeing the European reaction to the economic crisis. The troika, he said, was not working on behalf of Greece's creditors as it supposedly was, but rather on behalf of the global financial elites.

Based on my experience in Greece, it was clear that Mr. Varoufakis spoke for many of the Greek people in his distaste for the Euro and European Union in its current form. Unlike some of his countrymen, though, he did not call for a disbanding of the EU or a Greek exit from it but rather major reforms that would make it sustainable in the long term.

What the future holds for Greece, nobody can be sure. But its people have a storied history of battling long odds successfully; the Greeks are still a proud and diligent people. And I believe that their determination will, in one form or another, carry them through this crisis to a better future.



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Empathy is everything: slowing climate change

by Maria Hagen
Groundcover Intern &
Karen L. Totten
Groundcover Contributor

Lydia McMullen-Laird is working to make people care – a difficult task indeed when so many still remain unconcerned about climate change.

“Action follows empathy,” she said, quoting the former UN ambassador for the Philippines whom she met while in Paris last year for the Global Climate Summit.

McMullen-Laird, who grew up in Ann Arbor and considers it home, is a video producer and journalist at Liangma Productions in Beijing City, China. She speaks as a first-hand witness to the devastation that rising sea levels and increased severe weather events can wreak upon the economic, social and personal lives of a people and a nation.

Last January McMullen-Laird went to the Philippines, an island nation considered by climate experts to be one of the spots most affected by climate change. McMullen-Laird documented the destruction wrought by Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in 2013, the worst recorded storm to touch land, and the subsequent challenges the people face in repairing and recovering from the event.

“I am not having children because of climate change,” said Phillipine citizen AG Saño in an interview with McMullen-Laird, after his experiences in Typhoon Yolanda.

The entire family of parents and children with whom Saño, a muralist and photographer, was staying during the storm was killed. He managed to escape,



Damage in the Philippines is common from the ever-increasing number and heightening intensity of typhoons there.

but his camera gear and film footage of the storm was lost. The extended loss of life he saw due to flying debris, storm surge, ferocious winds and the aftermath of hunger and dehydration convinced him that to bring children into the world was selfish, as he would put their lives at high risk in a nation where storms are common and increasing in intensity and frequency because of climate change. All over the affected region, bodies were buried in mass graves due to the number of casualties and the risks to public health if they remained exposed. Since whole families were gone, and travel in the region was difficult, there was no one to claim them.

Saño's brother was a negotiator at the Paris Climate Summit in 2015. Through tears he spoke of his family's worry and fear when they could not locate AG for many days after the storm. He was finally found with another friend. In a stroke of fortune, AG's cameras came back to him through a rescue someone made after the storm.

But the devastation he witnessed convinced him that climate change was a killer.

The Philippines is a very poor country where homes are often built of man-grove sticks, straw and other materials easily vulnerable to wind and water. In addition, the local fishing inlets that are essential to their livelihood are affected by these frequent typhoons – eight or nine per year. Farmers' livelihoods are destroyed as they lose their crops in these storms. Fishing villages are just as badly off, with fish populations dwindling and waves sweeping their friends away in typhoons.

Relocation is already underway in some island countries, such as the Maldives. People go to larger islands or buy land in places like New Zealand where they will eventually be able to gather all their residents.

Between 1870 and 2004 sea levels rose nearly eight inches. At the current rate of glacial melt, sea levels are predicted

to rise 20 to 70 inches more during this century. New York, Miami, New Orleans and other coastal cities are already feeling the effects of rising ocean levels. As 44 percent of the world's population lives in coastal cities or within 150 kilometers of the sea (a distance believed to be the maximum range of a tsunami), there is vast potential for homelessness, hunger and mass exodus.

The Midwest, and other points inland, like Ann Arbor, belong to those regions of the country that will become refuges for those whose homes will be destroyed, said McMullen-Laird. As more areas of the world become uninhabitable through drought, flooding or other climate change events, a growing population will have to share the resources – and habitable lands – that remain.

McMullen-Laird did not grow up thinking she was going to be an environmentalist. She and her parents and siblings moved to Ann Arbor from Germany when she was nine. She quickly learned English, one of the five languages she now speaks. She attended the University of Michigan, studying public policy with minors in Russian and Program in the Environment, intending to work in international public policy.

While she was in college, McMullen-Laird was abroad at least part of each year, including spending summers in Russia. She was a Fulbright Scholar in 2013-2014, which she spent in China researching environmental relations between China and Russia. When it came time to choose where to locate, she chose China, as Russia is less problematic environmentally. As a carbon sink,

see CLIMATE CHANGE, page 11

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2	5	1		6			7	
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	6					9		7
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			2					8
	1			3		5	9	2

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Cryptoquote:

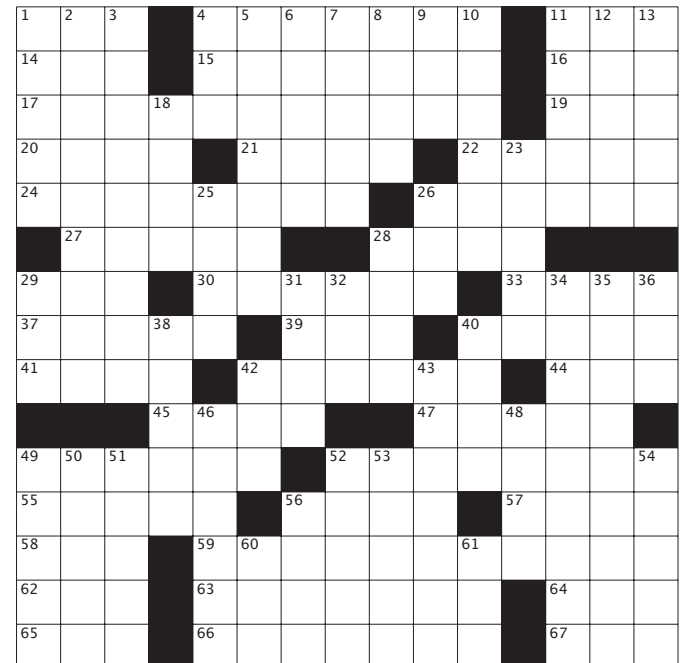
DCBBCS BPTE T
BPUAGTEW PUOOUR
RUSWG, VG UEC RUSW
BPTB DSVEKG MCTJC.
— DAWWPT

Clue: ☺ = I

Let's Eat! Peter A. Collins

ACROSS

1. Cosmo or Nat Geo, for instance
4. Copy
11. Peach's center
14. Flexible blackjack card
15. Provider of party food
16. Acapulco article
17. * Railway maintenance worker, once
19. Box office buys, for short
20. "What's the big ___?"
21. "In the Valley of ___" (2007 Tommy Lee Jones film)
22. Give one's two cents
24. * Indian spice
26. * Beans go-with
27. Manicotti or mostaccioli
28. Sunday service
29. The Braves, on scoreboards
30. Place for arriving office papers
33. Corner of a diamond?
37. Ignited again
39. * First lady?
40. Log home
41. ___ Mawr (Pennsylvania college)
42. Bahamian capital
44. Michigan winter hrs.
45. Some calculator batteries
47. Ville:France::__:Germany
49. * Football's "Galloping Ghost" Red ___
52. * Ethiopian river
55. The "thou" in "Wherefore art thou?"
56. Spa sounds
57. Boat bottom
58. "___ Beso" (1962 hit by 48-Down)
59. What the answers to the starred clues are, in Ann Arbor
62. A in German?
63. Cannonball Adderley's instrument
64. Dove's sound
65. Frat party container
66. Many quarterback passes
67. Slippery swimmer



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DOWN

1. Penn and Teller's forte
2. Electrical converter
3. By and large
4. In need of salt, as a road
5. Certain Mafioso
6. Novelist Calvino
7. When some banks open
8. Curved entrance
9. Golfer's peg
10. Goofs
11. Russian president Vladimir
12. How brave people do crossword puzzles
13. Frequent election topic
18. Many Little League coaches
23. Turkish big shot
25. Fighting
26. Wray of "King Kong" fame
28. Fannie ___ (some securities)
29. The ___ (University of Michigan's nature area, for short)
31. Oolong and Earl Grey
32. Campers, briefly
34. School for a boxer?
35. Plant under which a kiss may be planted
36. "Lord of the Rings" tree creature
38. Ridiculous
40. Like puppies and kittens
42. Dundee denial
43. In typical fashion
46. Old Greek markets
48. Canadian crooner Paul
49. From Athens
50. Riveter painted by Rockwell
51. In the middle of
52. Ulan ___ (Mongolian capital)
53. ___ apso
54. The sun, in Seville
56. Italian wine province
60. Cockney's cry for assistance?
61. M.D. scripts

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1, or the face value of the paper. I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell

to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:
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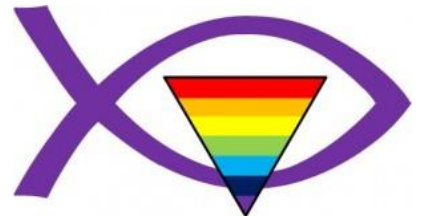
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Learning from Prince's death: bad research induced countless addictions

by Martin Stolzenberg
Groundcover News Contributor

When the news of Prince's death broke on April 28, 2016, it wasn't shocking to learn that a drug overdose was suspected. After all, he was a world-famous musician. But, the autopsy revealed that this was not another celebrity looking for a joy ride. It turned out that Prince was taking a heavy duty drug, Fentanyl, many times more powerful than heroin, to treat pain. With a reputation for clean living, it was thought that Prince was using Fentanyl because he suffered from intense knee and hip pain from many years of stage performances, according to the AP report of June 2, 2016.

In the past we have thought of people taking drugs for kicks or because of stress. Now we see and hear the word "opioids" often. These are opium-like compounds used to treat pain. Their use has surged in recent years. This has also caused a spike in the use of heroin because an addiction to pain killers is a step away from this easy-to-procure drug.

The increased use of opioids began in the 1980s when a New York pain-care specialist, Dr. Russell Portenoy, noticed that opioids were effective in treating cancer patients with terrible pain. He began to campaign to rehabilitate a group of painkillers derived from the opium poppy that had long been avoided by physicians because of their addictive qualities. They would be positioned as pain relievers. He claimed that the risk of addiction for pain usage was only one percent, opioids were easy to discontinue, and overdoses were extremely rare. His widespread claims were based on a study of only 38 patients.



Withdrawal of prescription opioids has led many people to street drugs, including heroin.

It caught on. In 1998 the *Federation of State Medical Boards* reassured doctors that they wouldn't face charges for prescribing large quantities of narcotics as long as it was part of medical treatment. This policy was drawn up with the assistance of several people with links to opioid manufacturers, such as Purdue Pharma (Oxycontin) and Endo Pharmaceuticals (Percocet).

Then the *Joint Commission*, a non-profit which accredits United States hospitals, got on board. It established a new standard, telling hospitals to regularly ask patients about pain and to make treating it a priority. The hospitals began to use the one-to-ten "smiley-frown" scale for this purpose.

In February 2015, National Public Radio (NPR) reported that with that approval physicians began to prescribe Oxycontin and Percocet in increasing quantities for pain. Current heroin users frequently say their addiction began with exposure to painkillers. Forty-five

percent of people who used heroin were also addicted to prescription opioid painkillers, as reported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This was especially common in wealthier areas where people have more access to medical care and to doctors who could write prescriptions.

As a result of these actions the number of prescriptions for opioids has almost tripled between 1991 and 2013, reaching 207 million. Also, the epidemic spread to all income strata and all regions. Oxycontin became the drug of choice, even in far off rural areas, among disadvantaged teenagers and adults.

Probably the aging population with more aches and pains, as well as increases in the number of people participating in rigorous athletics, also had something to do with the jump. Over time it became harder to get doctors to prescribe opioids as patients were becoming addicted and the medical community began to crack down.

That is when black market suppliers stepped in and harm increased. More than 18,000 people died of overdoses of opioids in 2014, up almost 400 percent since 2001. In the same period, deaths due to heroin increased from approximately 2,000 to 11,000, a gain of 550 percent. It's no wonder that we hear about a drug epidemic.

Meanwhile, Dr. Portenoy and other pain doctors who promoted the drugs say they erred by overstating the drugs' benefits and glossing over the risks. Dr. Portenoy said in an interview, "We didn't know then what we know now," according to a 2012 *Wall Street Journal* article.

So what can be done to tamp down this epidemic? Here are some of the steps recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

Make patients aware that the strongest

risk for heroin addiction is addiction to prescription opioid drugs.

Physicians should follow best practices for responsible painkiller prescription.

Increase access to substance abuse treatment services for opioid addiction through the Affordable Care Act and Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT).

Expand access to naloxone, an antidote, to reduce opioid overdose deaths.

Help local jurisdictions put effective practices to work in communities where drug addiction is highest.

Another innovation is happening in a Paterson, New Jersey emergency room. Since January 4, 2016 Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center, one of the busiest in the country, has been using opioids only as a last resort. Of the 170,000 patients who come to the Medical Center Emergency Room each year, 75 percent are seeking pain relief.

Aware of the exponential rise in opioid addiction nationwide and at his doorstep, Dr. Mark Rosenberg, St. Joe's chairman of the ER, sent a member of the staff, Dr. Alexis LaPietra, on a year's fellowship to study pain management. On completion, Dr. LaPietra trained the St. Joe's staff, and the ER stocked up on alternative medications.

Using this new protocol for most patients with common types of acute pain, doctors first try alternative regimens. This includes non-narcotic infusions and injections, ultrasound-guided nerve blocks, laughing gas, even "energy healing" and a wandering harpist.

In five months the hospital has reduced opioid use in the emergency room department by 38 percent. They have trained about 500 acute pain patients with non-opioid protocols. About three-quarters of these efforts were successful. For those who still took limited prescriptions for opioids, they were warned about the medication risks, and they were connected with hospital staff who are committed to sticking to the program's goal. Dr. Rosenberg also alerted other departments in the hospital, which dealt with emergency room follow-up patients, to sustain this philosophy.

It doesn't sound easy, but efforts like that at St. Joe's show that opioid use can be drastically decreased and its addiction prevalence reduced. But where are the safeguards from irresponsible researchers and overly influential pharmaceutical manufacturers to protect the public from the next Dr. Portenoy?

I understand that Prince really embraced all kinds of people. Maybe his death has been a call to action and he has not died in vain. I think he would like that.



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Gratitude to Chuck Warpehoski – ban lifted!

by Elizabeth S. Kurtz, aka “Lit”

It seems rare when two entities sync and create positive change. It happened last month when Groundcover News, designed to link us to the larger community, and the City of Ann Arbor solved a perplexing issue that had dogged the Groundcover since its inception.

In a previous article entitled “Is the Art Fair?” I bemoaned that the lack of Groundcover News representation at the July Art Fair seemed unfair. The article mentioned the dilemma faced by Groundcover vendors during Art Fair of being confined to only one booth.

Almost before the ink set, Councilman Chuck Warpehoski was contacted about the problem by Groundcover editor Lee Alexander and he set about finding solutions to the dilemma. Without hesitation, Warpehoski went to work untangling the conundrum. It



Groundcover vendors were thrilled to be able to mingle with Art Fair crowds and sell Groundcover News there this year for the first time.

turned out there is an existing clause that allows vendors to sell under a Charitable Solicitation Permit. This recognizes us as being members of a community of people who are margin-

alized, and therefore, have the right to ask for a donation.

This by no means suggests that vendors are not entrepreneurs, as we are. But as

with all street papers, our work is done under the umbrella of a non-profit, which allows us to ask for donations.

Thanks to Chuck's MacGyver-like efforts, within a week of the article being published, another councilman approached me outside of the YMCA where I was selling and asked if I had heard the news. Councilman Chip Smith informed me that informed that we would be allowed to sell within the Art Fairs. I was ecstatic.

We are indeed fortunate that we are among the cities that have a street paper, which allows the general public an opportunity to connect to us in a meaningful, safe manner. We are even more fortunate to have a caring, proactive Councilman who works on our behalf. For that, we are more than grateful.

Free at Rio Olympics: 9 M. condoms

Reporting by Ricardo Moraes

Writing by Brad Brooks

Editing by Frances Kerry

Courtesy of Reuters/insp.ngo

Brazil's government will hand out 9 million condoms for free around Rio de Janeiro during the Olympics in August, a push meant to encourage safe sex and also defend the Amazon rainforest.

Rio's local Olympic organizing committee said about 450,000 of the sustainably-produced condoms will be destined for athletes and staff housed in the Olympic Village.

The rest will be made widely available to the many visitors who will be arriving in the city in just a few weeks, the Health Ministry said.

All the condoms to be distributed are produced by Natex, a factory in the western Amazonian state of Acre, deep in the rainforest near Brazil's border with Bolivia.

The factory, run by the Acre state government, uses latex gathered from Amazon rubber trees by tappers who are employed by a government-run program designed to protect their traditional livelihood, foster sustainable use of the rainforest and deter illegal loggers.

The tappers see themselves as guardians of the rainforest.

On a recent outing, Raimundo Mendes de Barros, a 71-year-old lifelong rubber tapper with a stark white beard, gathered the milky-white latex dripping into

metal buckets hooked at the base of countless trees. Above, the tropical sun was filtered by the Amazon canopy.

Barros spoke with pride about the fierce fight he and other sustainable rubber tappers wage to maintain their craft.

“Our condom factory, aside from guaranteeing a fair price for the rubber, employs hundreds,” he said. “It gives the world a product – the condom – that will be very present there in Rio, to fight disease and help with birth control.”

For decades, tappers like Barros have been on the front line of pushing Brazilian leaders to do more to halt deforestation, which is mostly caused by the illegal clearing of forest for ranching, soy farms and timber extraction.

The fight has sometimes come at a heavy cost as farmers and loggers have sometimes retaliated with hired guns. Scores of people have been killed over the years trying to protect the forest, most notably the internationally-known environmentalist and rubber tapper Chico Mendes.

His 1988 murder in Xapuri, where the condom factory now stands, helped galvanize the government to take serious measures to battle deforestation and the violence against Amazon defenders.

For several years Brazil's Health Ministry has distributed millions of condoms from the factory for free at big events around Brazil – most notably the annual bacchanal of Carnival.

CMH: doing more with less

continued from page 4

passionate about the work he does, he stated, “I and I think many others with CMH could attest to the calls to do more with less.” He shared the following speech at a CMH town hall meeting:

On my best days, I am an ambassador of hope.

On my worst days, I am a bit touched in the head and heart with bipolar disorder.

On my best days, I walk with people on the road to recovery.

Even on my worst days, I show up and work till the day is done.

On my best days, I live to serve God by serving the most vulnerable of our community.

On my worst days, I help clients get connected to programs, and I fill out paperwork.

On my best days, I watch as people flourish in the strengths and dignity for which all people long.

On my worst days, I merely help people deal with degrading and demeaning diseases.

On my best days, I celebrate as people find freedom from addictions.

On my worst days, I merely help people survive by having food and clothes despite their addictions.

On my best days, I am amazed at the resiliency of the image of God among those who meet at the offices and in the community.

On my worst days, I just guide people through community health education so that they can make informed decisions about their health.

On my worst days, I struggle to fit in all the work I have in the few hours I'm allotted in a week.

On my best days, I forget about the time and enjoy serving people who are proactive about preventative health exams.

On my worst days, I catch myself struggling to figure out if that day amounted to much.

On my best days, I breathe exuberantly at the end of the day, and reflect on what a difference has been made in the lives of those we have spoken with that day.

On my worst days, I find myself racing through a call list and celebrating simply the fact that a page is filled with a list of calls made.

On my best days, I remind people that they are cared for, unique, and loved when I call to remind folks of upcoming appointments.

It appears I've been up here long enough; it's about time I sit down as merely one more sociable worker among my peers.

Countering climate change with empathy

continued from page 7

Russia's forests absorb a certain amount of the carbon dioxide which comes to them. China, on the other hand, "has every environmental problem. It's a lab for environmentalists," said McMullen-Laird.

Air, water, and soil are in danger from pollution in China. According to McMullen-Laird, water is the biggest problem. "Almost everyone would say air, because it is so visible. They breathe it in every day. Water pollution is less visible, so there is less activism. It's the sneakier problem," she said.

With more dams being built for hydro-power as a part of China's transition to sustainable energy sources, water pollution will become more prominent. Runoff from polluted soils is already damaging the water, as the hydro-power industry is almost completely unregulated.

China's environmental laws are very good, said McMullen-Laird, but there is little enforcement.

"Things are based on relationships here," she explained. "Relationships between local law enforcement and corporations protect the

factories. And there is only one party, and it's corrupt."

Because of the one-party system, individual action is more important than protesting in China. Protesting is often illegal. "People can't vote, can't protest, so individual action is the only option left," said McMullen-Laird, who herself is living waste-free for a year as a form of reducing her impact on the environment. She also founded an NGO with her brother Samuel to inspire others to action.

"Before people are inspired to act, you have to make them feel the urgency," said McMullen-Laird of her decision to work in video journalism. "I wanted to influence and connect with people more." She left public policy law and focused on helping people see how climate change affects their lives now. People don't take action on their own unless they care, she says – and this is where empathy comes in.

Responses to climate change are very different in China than in the United

States. The United States blames China for its enormous carbon footprint, while America also creates plenty of pollution itself, including by its consumption of Chinese goods. "China is the world's factory. All of our stuff is made there," said McMullen-Laird. Their development is more recent than that of Western nations so they often feel as though it is their turn to pollute.


"There is a huge difference between vulnerable nations like the Philippines, and the big polluters, like China and the United States. The homeless community across the world will understand better than anyone what it means to have people with privilege overlook their concerns and not care," McMullen-Laird said.

"It is easy to lose hope. Sometimes," said McMullen-Laird, "I wonder, what I am doing here? But as individuals we

can be passionate about our slice of the problem, one small program, one piece of legislation, one garden at a time. It's important to remember our actions affect people around the world." She added, "It's going to take every type of person from every field."

For those who want to make an impact on climate change McMullen-Laird suggests the following:

- Ride a bike to run errands and go to work or school.
- Grow a vegetable garden.
- Eat locally-grown food.
- Consume less meat.
- Live waste-free for a certain amount of time. For advice and support see: www.livezerowaste.org.
- Lobby one piece of legislation that you believe will make a difference.



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– Buddha

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3	7	2	8	5	9	6	4	1
6	9	5	2	4	1	7	3	8
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Hot pepper jelly

by Elizabeth Bauman
Groundcover Contributor

Perfect on cream cheese and crackers. Recipe courtesy of Paula Deen.

Ingredients:

3/4 cup chopped green bell pepper
1/4 cup chopped fresh hot green jalapeno pepper
1 1/2 cups apple cider vinegar
5 cups sugar
4 ounces pectin (recommended brand: Certo)
4 drops green food coloring*
Special Equipment: 6 (1/2-pint) canning jars with lids

Directions:

Process bell pepper and hot pepper in a food processor until finely minced.
Combine pepper mixture, vinegar, and sugar in a saucepan and bring to a rolling boil.
Remove from heat and add pectin and food coloring.
Pour into sterilized jars and seal**.
Yield: 6 (1/2-pint) jars

* For natural food coloring recipes, visit: leitesculinaria.com/96672/recipes-natural-food-coloring.html. You also can find prepared natural food coloring at alternative grocery stores like Whole Foods and Arbor Farms.

** Cook's Note: Follow USDA guidelines for proper sterilization and canning procedures. Properly handled sterilized equipment will keep canned foods in good condition for years.



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